

Stevenson Commons EIS

Chapter 15: Public Health

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the Proposed Actions' effect on public health. As defined by the *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, public health is the organized effort of society to protect and improve the health and well-being of the population through monitoring; assessment and surveillance; health promotion; prevention of disease, injury, disorder, disability, and premature death; and reducing inequalities in health status. The goal of CEQR with respect to public health is to determine whether adverse impacts on human health may occur as a result of a proposed project and, if so, to identify measures to mitigate such effects.

The *CEQR Technical Manual* states that a public health assessment is not necessary for most projects. Where no significant adverse unmitigated impacts are found in other CEQR analysis areas—such as air quality, water quality, hazardous materials, or noise—no public health analysis is warranted. If, however, an unmitigated adverse impact is identified in any of these other CEQR analysis areas, the lead agency may determine that a public health assessment is warranted for that specific technical area.

As outlined in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the Proposed Actions involve a minor modification to the previously approved Stevenson Commons large scale residential development (LSRD) plan and a modification to the previously approved Stevenson Commons City-aided limited-profit housing project, which would facilitate new residential and community facility development at Stevenson Commons in the Soundview neighborhood of Bronx Community District 9. The Stevenson Commons site (the “Project Area”) at 1850 Lafayette Avenue (Block 3600, Lots 4, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 40, and 50) comprises the 679,000-square foot (sf) superblock bounded by Lafayette Avenue, White Plains Road, Seward Avenue, and Thieriot Avenue. The eastern portion of the site is currently developed with a mix of residential, retail, community facility, and/or accessory parking uses.

The Proposed Actions would facilitate new construction on the Stevenson Commons site that would result in an incremental (net) increase compared to No-Action conditions of approximately 735 affordable dwelling units (DUs), including 621 income-restricted housing units and 114 affordable independent residences for seniors (AIRS), 33,995 gross square feet (gsf) of community facility uses, approximately 1.94 acres of publicly accessible open space, and a net decrease of 104 accessory parking spaces (the “Proposed Project”). New development would be spread across six new buildings on the Stevenson Commons site. Construction of the Proposed Project is expected to begin in the second quarter of 2021 with all components complete and operational by early 2028.

As described in the relevant analyses of this EIS, the Proposed Actions would not result in any unmitigated significant adverse hazardous materials or water quality impacts, and, with the establishment of an (E) designation (E-626) as part of the Proposed Actions, no unmitigated significant adverse impacts would occur in the areas of air quality (operational or construction-related) or operational noise. However, the Proposed Actions have the potential to result in unmitigated temporary significant adverse construction-related noise impacts at nearby sensitive receptors, as presented in Chapter 20, “Unavoidable Adverse Impacts.”

B. PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

The Proposed Actions are not expected to result in unmitigated significant adverse impacts in the following technical areas that contribute to public health: operational air quality, construction-related air quality, operational noise, water quality, or hazardous materials. The Proposed Actions could result in temporary, unmitigated significant adverse construction-related noise impacts. However, during construction associated with the Proposed Project, none of the sensitive nearby receptors would experience prolonged exposure to noise levels above 85 dB(A) or episodic and unpredictable exposure to short-term impacts of noise at high decibel levels. As such, the Proposed Actions are not anticipated to cause excessively high chronic noise exposure and, therefore, are not expected to result in a significant adverse public health impact related to noise.

C. PRELIMINARY SCREENING

Construction Noise

As described in Chapter 17, "Construction," the construction noise impact analysis identified potentially significant adverse impacts at sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the proposed construction work areas and along truck routes to and from the Development Site. Construction associated with the Proposed Project would be required to follow the requirements of the New York City Noise Control Code for construction noise control measures. Specific noise control measures may include a variety of source controls, path controls, and receiver controls and will be described in a noise mitigation plan required under the New York City Noise Control Code. While the incorporation of feasible and practicable mitigation measures will continue to be explored between the DEIS and FEIS, they are not expected to completely eliminate the significant adverse construction-related noise impact. Therefore, predicted noise levels due to construction-related activities associated with the Proposed Project would result in increased noise levels that would exceed the *CEQR Technical Manual* impact criteria.

Assessment

The *CEQR Technical Manual* construction noise impact thresholds are based on quality of life considerations and not on public health considerations. In terms of public health, significance is not determined based on the incremental change in noise level, but is based principally upon the magnitude of noise level and duration of exposure. Noise in and around homes may decrease quality of life by disrupting sleep or interfering with conversations. Prolonged exposure to levels above 85 dBA will eventually harm hearing.

Although the *CEQR Technical Manual* thresholds for significant adverse construction noise impacts are predicted to be exceeded at certain locations during construction, these exceedances would not constitute a significant adverse public health impact. An impact found pursuant to a quality of life framework does not definitively imply that an impact will exist when the analysis area is evaluated in terms of public health. The predicted noise impacts identified would not constitute chronic exposure to high levels of noise because of the short term and intermittent nature of construction noise as described in Chapter 17, "Construction." The maximum predicted construction noise levels occur over a limited duration during the construction period based on the amount and type of construction work occurring in the construction work areas. Additionally, during construction associated with the Proposed Actions, none of the identified nearby receptors would experience prolonged exposure to noise levels above 85 dB(A) or episodic and unpredictable exposure to short-term impacts of noise at high decibel levels. Furthermore, construction activity would typically be limited to a single shift during the day with limited exceptions that

would require variances from the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB), leaving the remainder of the day and evening unaffected by construction noise. As the construction noise levels would fluctuate and would not occur constantly throughout the construction period, which itself is limited in duration, it would not be categorized as “chronic.” Consequently, construction of the Proposed Project would not have the potential to result in chronic exposure to high levels of noise, and is therefore not expected to result in a significant adverse public health impact related to noise.